

REMARKS

The Examiner is thanked for the careful examination of the application and for the indication of allowable subject matter. However, in view of the foregoing amendments and the remarks that follow, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the rejections. Support for the amendments may be found at least at paragraph [0025] of the original application.

Claims 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 15, 20-24, and 26-27 have been rejected as allegedly being obvious over JP 11-168094, hereinafter Yuda, in view of USP 6,086,677, hereinafter Umotoy. Yuda is relied upon for its teaching of a vacuum reaction chamber that allegedly includes a *dividing* plate separating the vacuum chamber into two spaces. Umotoy is relied upon for its alleged teaching of a distribution plate having separate passages extending therethrough.

However, applicants submit that Yuda does not teach such a dividing plate, as claimed in the present application, and the claims have been amended to emphasize the differences between the present invention and the applied prior art. For example, claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the dividing plate is arranged in the vacuum reaction chamber such that the only communication between the plasma discharge space and the film deposition process space is through the plurality of holes extending through the dividing plate. In one embodiment of the invention, the dividing plate extends all the way to the walls of the vacuum chamber, thus preventing gases from passing around the edges of the dividing plate. In contrast to the present invention, the "plate" in Yuda is actually a mesh electrode 11

which is suspended in the interior of the vacuum chamber. Gases can easily pass around the edges of the electrode 11.

In contrast to Yuda, with the invention of claim 1, beneficial relative pressures can be maintained in the respective portions of the vacuum chamber so that the flow of gases through the dividing plate can be effectively controlled to achieve a desired distribution of gases and gas pressures to minimize the likelihood that precursor gases will enter the plasma discharge space. See paragraphs [0025] and [0054]. As set forth above, Yuda does not teach or suggest a *dividing* plate, at least as that term is used in claim 1.

Similar amendments have been made to the remaining independent claims 9, 15, and 21, and the remarks set forth above with respect to claim 1 also apply to the remaining independent claims.

Claims 4, 5, 8, 14, 20-24, and 26-27 depend from the independent claims and are thus patentable at least for the reasons set forth above.

Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of claims 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 14, 15, 20-24, and 26-27.

Claims 10, 11, 16, and 17 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as allegedly being obvious over Yuda, Umotoy, and USP 5,433,786, hereinafter Hu. However, the examiner is relying upon Hu simply for its alleged teaching of rivets and fasteners. Accordingly, Hu does not otherwise overcome the deficiency of the rejections of the independent claims based on Yuda and Umotoy. Accordingly, the

Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the rejections of claims 10, 11, 16, and 17.

In the event that there are any questions concerning this response, or the application in general, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned so that prosecution of the application may be expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

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